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ABSTRACT

The academic fate of students from different ethnic groups under open admissions at City University of New York is examined. Three central questions are addressed: (1) Who came and how was the ethnic composition of the university affected by open admissions? (2) To what degree did different parts of the university become ethnically integrated? (3) How did the members of different ethnic groups do? The analyses cover the first five years of open admissions and utilize four types of data. Open admissions did provide important access to the university for minority students, but more whites than minority students benefited from the policy for the years 1970-72. The distribution of minority groups at the university became more equal as a result of open admissions, but some stratification did remain. The impact of stratification at preceding levels of the system, in high schools and elementary schools, continued to be felt. Minority students were more likely to be found in the technical-vocational curricula, but student preferences appear to be the contributing factor. Students in the open admissions program did well by comparison with national norms. Even when high school performance was controlled, relatively consistent and sometimes large differences were visible in ethnic rates of success. In the senior colleges, Jewish students were generally the most successful and Hispanic students were the least successful. In the community colleges, the white groups were generally more successful than the blacks and Hispanics. Ten statistical tables are included. (SW)

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Ethnicity Equality and Hierarchy: The Fate of Ethnic Groups Under An Open Access Model of Higher Education*

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*A paper presented to meetings of the American Sociological Association, San Francisco, September, 1978.

The decade of the 1960's witnessed intense concern with equality, ranging in expression from civil disobedience to strident demonstrations and riots, from Watts at one end of the country to Ocean Hill-Brownsville at the other. One of the decade's many sparks exploded in the spring of 1969 in a series of angry and ominous confrontations on the campus of The City College of New York, the oldest and most famous of the fifteen two- and four-year colleges then comprising the City University of New York (CUNY). The confrontations focused on a list of demands issued by groups wanting increased access to City College for educationally disadvantaged students, notably blacks and Hispanics. The demands had a forceful logic, not only in the egalitarian concerns of the 60's, but also in the history of City University.

The University, and particularly City College, had played a unique role in the social mobility of the children and grandchildren of European immigrants, especially for Jews coming from eastern Europe at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th. Largely as a result of these students, by the 1920's and 30's the City College student body was thought to be one of the most academically able of any in the nation, and the college acquired the reputation of being the "proletarian Harvard." The list of accomplishments of its graduates--in academia, business and public life--read like a selection of Who's Who in America, contributing to faith in the University as an open door to the middle class.

Nonetheless, what the University had done for earlier groups coming from Europe it had failed to do by the late 1960's for the newly arriving groups from the American south and the Caribbean. In the post-World War II period the major clients of the University continued to be the descendants of European immigrants, even though the ethnic demography of New York was changing rapidly as a result newer migrations. Southern blacks and Puerto Ricans came to New York in large numbers, filling the labor vacuum created by the restrictive immigration legislation

of the 1920's, but these groups were virtually excluded from the University's four-year colleges until the mid-1960's because of increasingly stringent entrance requirements. While City College was--ironically--an open access institution at the end of the nineteenth century, allowing any high school graduate to attend for free, by the 1960's a high school average in the mid- to upper eighties was required for admission to the four-year colleges, and few blacks and Hispanics were admitted. Although a special program for minority students was initiated in 1966 with city and state funding, blacks and Hispanics continued to be starkly underrepresented.

The situation was especially dramatic in the case of City College. Sitting high on a hill in the middle of Harlem, its gothic architecture gave it the air of a medieval fortress, insulated from the hopes and dreams of the people below. So it seemed foreordained when in the spring of 1969 a group of Third World students along with some activist white students occupied campus buildings and issued a set of demands, including--most importantly for our purposes--a demand for drastically increased minority enrollment. After lengthy and complex negotiations between the dissidents and various segments of the City College faculty and administration, and after hearings held by CUNY's central governing body, the Board of Higher Education, a decision was made: Beginning in the fall of 1970, all graduates of New York City high schools would be guaranteed seats at the campuses of the University. A new era of open admission had begun.

Paradoxically, open admissions began at CUNY as doubts grew about the potential of educational systems to remedy inequality. With the issuance of the Coleman Report in 1966, a decade of debate began about the role of education in recreating or, alternatively, mitigating inequality in each new generation. The immediate doubts created by the Coleman Report and other works--most notably, Jencks' Inequality--concerned the effects, if any, of schooling. The Coleman Report concluded that the characteristics of the schools students attended and presumably the quality of the education they received in them seemed remarkably ineffective in accounting for the varying degrees of their academic success. In

particular, race differences in cognitive outcomes could not be explained to a substantial degree by the measures of school characteristics used by the study. The analyses of Jencks and his co-workers not only supported these conclusions of the Coleman Report but also indicated that neither school characteristics nor amount of education were strongly related to subsequent inequalities of occupational status or income.

Responding in part to the concerns of Coleman and Jencks, a number of critical social theorists have recently been examining the functions of the educational system. Their examination--whose most visible exposition has been Schooling in Capitalist America by Bowles and Gintis--emphasizes reproduction and reinforcement of the existing system of social stratification as prime functions of education.[1] In their view, education is closely harnessed to the American capitalist system and serves the needs of its hierarchical division of labor.

This critical interpretation explicitly considers open access to higher education, reconciling that with continuing limitations on social mobility, especially for those from the lowest class and ethnic backgrounds. In this view, increases in access to higher education are offset by increases in its internal stratification. Higher educational systems are divided into tracks distinguished by the curricula they provide and the occupational strata for which they destine students. Students are allocated to tracks by apparently meritocratic criteria, such as scores on standardized tests, with the result that lower-class black and Hispanic students are confined largely to community colleges providing explicitly vocational curricula, dooming them to clerical and technical jobs near the bottom of the white-collar world. By contrast, middle-class white students tend to be placed into four-year colleges with liberal arts curricula, runways for take-off into professional careers. This interpretation concludes that, in the end, open admissions may not alleviate inequality but strengthen it by providing the illusion of "equal opportunity" to those destined for the lowest levels of white-collar jobs.

Thus, there is ample room to doubt the impact of open admissions and need for a full assessment of its results. In this paper, we will examine the academic fate of students from different ethnic groups under open admissions at City University. Our examination will address three central questions. The first is: Who came, and how was the ethnic composition of the University affected by open admissions? Both in terms of the University's intent and public perception of that intent, the program aimed to provide increased opportunity for minority students, specifically blacks and Hispanics. Nonetheless, to a degree not generally recognized, whites were also beneficiaries. The open admissions program attracted substantial numbers of working and middle-class Jewish and Catholic students, the former predominantly of eastern European origins and the latter frequently of Irish or Italian descent. Thus, the consequences of open admissions for the ethnic representativeness of the University's student body require careful examination.

The second major question is: To what degree did different <u>parts</u> of the University become ethnically integrated? An answer to this question will also go a long way toward answering the suspicions that open admissions would be offset by the increasing internal stratification of the University, visible in the segregation of different ethnic groups into distinct levels of the University. We will not only seek to determine the degree of segregation, or stratification, but also, if they exist, the processes from which they arise.

The third question is simply: How did the members of different ethnic groups do? We will examine measures of academic failure or success, such as drop-out and graduation rates, in an effort to determine whether open admissions led to any reduction of ethnic inequality in the attainment of the educational credentials required for middle-class occupational careers. The answer will also help us determine who benefitted as a result of open admissions.

STRUCTURE OF THE CUNY OPEN ACCESS MODEL

As prologue to the consideration of these questions, it is important to provide a clear picture of the open access model implemented by CUNY and to locate it in the broader context of the evolution toward universal higher education.[2] Open access higher education is hardly new in the United States. Indeed, its roots go back to the establishment of the land grant colleges. These colleges, found particularly in the midwest, offered admission to all high school graduates. More recently, the California public higher education system received wide notice after World War II, when its "differential access" version of open admissions developed rapidly.

In light of these precedents, it seems curious that the CUNY policy received such widespread national attention. However, a closer look at the CUNY model reveals features not duplicated in the other systems. One of these was the actual admission criteria. Admission to the University was guaranteed by the new policy. Entrance to one of the eight four-year senior colleges was generally assured if the student had attained at least an 80 average in high school (in academic, college preparatory courses) or had graduated in the top half of the high school class. Other high school students could enroll in one of the seven community colleges.[3]

On its face this structure was much less stratified than the widely known California model, which consists of three tiers: (1) the university level which accepts the top 12.5% of high school graduates; (2) the state colleges which accept the top third; (3) the two year junior colleges which accept all others.[4] The CUNY system formally distinguished only two- and four-year colleges, thus constituting a two-tier system. In contrast to the California system, the use of either high school average or rank to admit a student to the upper CUNY tier was designed to generate less sorting of students between senior and community colleges.

It was especially intended to increase minority enrollment in senior colleges, since students with low averages in predominantly minority high schools could still qualify on the rank criterion.

The goal of increased opportunity was apparent in a second major feature of the policy: mobility between two- and four-year colleges. A place in one of the senior colleges was guaranteed for any graduate of a community college. At least on paper, then, the community colleges were not designed as "dead-end" institutions whose primary function was to provide terminal vocational education.

There was a third unique aspect to the CUNY plan. Other open enrollment systems were characterized by early and high dropout rates.[5] In contrast, CUNY aimed to stop or at least slow the revolving door. The primary means for achieving this aim was the introduction of programs of remediation, supportive counseling, and related services on a scale unparalleled in American higher education.[6] In addition, the University decided that no student should be dismissed for academic reasons during the "grace period" of the freshman year. Since other open access programs define their obligation as the creation of access, the responsibility for academic success belongs to the student. At CUNY the failure of the student was to a significant degree considered also as a failure of the institution. Thus, the CUNY program was unique in its attempt to provide equality of educational opportunity encompassing not only access but also outcome.

NATURE OF THE DATA

Our analyses cover the first five years of open admissions and utilize four types of data. The first is an annual ethnic census conducted by the University which provided data concerning ethnicity, college of enrollment, sex, class in college, and the like. This form was anonymous and the information collected could

not, therefore, be integrated with other data sources. The format of the ethnic census allows us to distinguish whites from minority students (blacks and Hispanics), but it does not provide for ethnic distinctions among whites (e.g., Irish Catholics, Italian Catholics, Jews). Nonetheless, these data provide the basis for a very important set of trend analyses dealing with the impact of open admissions on the enrollment of black and Hispanic students in the different levels of CUNY.

Such analyses meet with one significant problem. Open admissions was not the only vehicle for increasing access to CUNY for minority students. Both the senior college program, "SEEK" (Search for Education, Elevation and Knowledge), and the community college program, called College Discovery, added minority students as well. In fact, these programs consisted almost entirely of black and Hispanic students during the years we are considering. In assessing the impact of open admissions on minority enrollments, then, special program students must be separated from other minority students. This has been done by using a second CUNY data source: the annual fall enrollment reports which provide headcount data for each CUNY college and separate enumerations for the special program students. By using both the ethnic census and the enrollment reports, we have been able to make those estimates necessary for the trend analyses of the effects of open admissions on the minority composition of the University.

Our last two data sources allow us to go far beyond aggregate census tabulations of minority enrollment. The first of these consists of survey questionnaires administered to the first three freshman classes entering after open admissions began (i.e., the 1970, 1971 and 1972 freshmen).[7] These questionnaires requested a wide variety of information relating to student ethnic and socio-economic background, attitudes and aspirations. The second comes from official University student data files which contain important information about high school experience and college academic outcomes such as grade point averages, dropout, graduation and mobility, through the spring of 1975.

These two data sources have been integrated and allow us to focus our analysis on the important ethnic groups at CUNY.[8] Our concern has been to shed light on white ethnicity as well as non-white. And, although the recent attention to white ethnicity has emphasized nationality differences, our analyses of the CUNY data suggest that religion captures the more important ethnic differences among those of European ancestry; nationality differences within the major religious groups seem minor by comparison.[9] Consequently, for the 1970 and 1971 freshmen, we have derived the following ethnic categories: blacks, Hispanics,[10] Jews and non-Hispanic Catholics (For simplicity, the non-Hispanic Catholics will be referred to as "Catholics" throughout.) For the 1972 freshmen, we cannot distinguish the Catholic and Jewish groups[11] and our analyses will be presented for whites, blacks and Hispanics. It should be noted that the groups we have omitted, such as white Protestants and Asians, are numerically small. For example, our ethnic categories include over 85% of the freshmen in 1970.

BENEFITS OF ACCESS: COLLEGE PLACEMENT

Those who have highlighted the relationship between education and the hierarchical division of labor in a capitalist society have seen the two- and four-year colleges as constituting very different tracks, with different curricula implying widely divergent occupational and economic outcomes. In our earlier discussion we have portrayed CUNY as such a two-tier system (in contrast to the California three-tier model). However, CUNY can also be viewed as a three tier system by distinguishing between two groups of senior colleges: elite and non-elite. The schools we are calling "elite" are distinguished by the fact that they are much older than the other CUNY senior colleges and have, for that reason, stronger public reputations.[12] Our examination of the distribution of students across levels will use both the two- and three-tier views of the CUNY system.

When open admissions began in 1970, the freshman class was about 75% larger than that of the previous year. Almost all of this increase was attributable to the

new policy.[13] In addition, the racial composition of the freshman class approximated the racial composition of the previous year's high school graduating class for the first time. Blacks and Hispanics increased their representation from 20% of the 1969 freshman class to 27% of the 1970. The numbers of blacks and Hispanics more than doubled between 1969 and 1970 (and more than tripled, if SEEK and College Discovery students are discounted).

How were these increased numbers of minority students distributed across the levels of CUNY? Table 1 presents the proportions of minority enrollment, in which blacks and Hispanics are combined, at the different levels of CUNY for the years 1969 through 1975. The Table makes dramatically clear the changes which took place. From 1969 (the last year before open admissions) through 1975, the proportions of black and Hispanic students among all entering students (including those in the special SEEK and College Discovery programs) more than doubled at CUNY as well as at most of its levels.

However, if we exclude special program students, then the increases in minority enrollment under open admissions look even more stunning. At the senior college levels, in particular, the representation of blacks and Hispanics more than quintupled from 1969 to 1975.

To what extent were minority students under- or overrepresented at specific levels of CUNY? To assess the degree to which ethnicity was an important stratifying principle, we can calculate the ratio of the percentage of blacks and Hispanics at any level of CUNY for a given year to their percentage among the entering students for that year. A ratio below 1 indicates that minority students were underrepresented at that level by comparison with their overall proportion in the freshman class, while a ratio above 1 indicates their overrepresentation. These ratios appear in Table 2.

TABLE 1

REPRESENTATION OF MINORITY STUDENTS AMONG STUDENTS ENTERING DIFFERENT LEVELS OF CUNY FROM 1969 TO 1975
(Source: Ethnic censuses of various years)

% of minority students among <u>all entering students</u> at...

	type of college					
cohort	elite senior	other senior	all senior	community	all of CUNY	size of cohort
1969	15.2	14.8	15.1	26.3	20.0	19,948
1970	22.1	23.0	22.3	33.3	27.0	35,515
1971	24.0	28.6	25.5	37.3	31.2	38,829
1972	23.0	34.1	27.0	43.8	34.8	37,912
1973	30.1	36.9	32.6	49.2	40.3	37,342
1974	30.9	41.8	35.1	49.7	42.0	40,014
1975[a]	33.8	48.4	40.0	46.9	43.3	35,582

% of minority students among <u>non-special program students</u> at...

	type of college					
cohort	elite senior	other senior	all senior	community	all of CUNY	size of cohort
1969	4.5	2.3	4.1	16.6	9.5	17,645
1970	10.4	13.5	11.4	26.5	17.9	31,596
1971	15.7	22.6	18.1	32.5	25.0	35,639
1972	12.5	27.3	18.1	39.8	28.5	35,545
1973	21.1	29.2	24.0	44.1	33.5	33,529
1974	18.6	30.1	23.0	44.2	33.4	34,846
1975[a]	26.1	42.6	33.1	41.7	37.3	32,140

[a]Hunter is excluded from the 1975 calculations because of its low response rate to the ethnic census.

Considerable inequality existed in the distribution of minority students before open admissions, as shown by the ratios for 1969. Without the special program students, we see that minority students were greatly underrepresented at the senior colleges, particularly at the non-elite senior colleges. When we include the special program students, the inequality is decreased to some degree but remains substantial. This simple comparison demonstrates the importance of SEEK in gaining some representation for minority students at the senior college level.

But Table 2 shows that considerable changes occurred in the distribution of minority students during the years of open admissions, generally in the direction of greater equality. The more important shifts occurred between the senior and community colleges. Whether we include or exclude special program students, the overrepresentation of minority students at the community college level had sharply declined by 1975 and, with it, their underrepresentation at the senior college level. Focussing on all students at the senior college level, however, their underrepresentation at the elite senior colleges was little changed during open admissions. Thus, their increasing representation at the senior college level resulted for the most part from changes in their representation at the non-elite senior colleges, where blacks and Hispanics had become slightly overrepresented among the entering students by 1975. When we consider only students admitted outside of SEEK, then the representation of minority students at the elite senior colleges did increase. The lack of change in their representation when all students are considered probably indicates a decline in the importance of SEEK at the elite senior colleges during the early years of open admissions.

Although the representation of minority students increased throughout CUNY, some inequality in their distribution remained even as late as 1975. Given the unequal high school backgrounds of minority and white students and their different social class origins, it is probably inevitable that, in the 1970's, there would continue to

TABLE 2

STRATIFICATION OF ENTERING MINORITY STUDENTS ACROSS THE LEVELS OF CUNY FROM 1969 TO 1975[a]
(Source: Table 1)

all entering students

	type of college			
cohort	elite senior	other senior	all senior	community
1969	.76	.74	.76	1.32
1970	.82	.85	.83	1.23
1971	.77	.92	.82	1.20
1972	.66	.98	.78	1.26
1973	.75	.92	.81	1.22
1974	.74	1.00	.84	1.18
1975	.78	1.12	.92	1.08

non-special program students only

	type of college			
cohort	elite senior	other senior	all senior	community
1969	.47	.24	.43	1.75
1970	.58	.75	.64	1.48
1971	.63	.90	.72	1.30
1972	.45	.96	.64	1.40
1973	.63	.87	.72	1.32
1974	.56	.90	.69	1.32
1975	.70	1.14	.89	1.12

[a]Ratios of actual proportions to those expected if minority students were uniformly distributed across the levels of CUNY.

be differences between them in access to educational resources, even under an open admissions system. To assess the degree to which racial stratification existed at CUNY under open admissions, then, it is necessary to compare it with other open admissions systems. The older California system provides a clear contrast. From data presented by Jaffe and Adams,[14] it is clear that minority students were far more stratified in California than they were at CUNY. For example, the proportion of blacks and Hispanics was ten times as great in the California community colleges than at its University centers in the late 1960's, while minority students were less than twice as important in the composition of the community than of the elite senior colleges at CUNY. CUNY under open admissions appears far more equitable in this comparison.

Minority students were not the sole beneficiaries of open admissions. Large numbers of whites were also admitted under the new program. In order to consider the concept of benefit in a broad sense, we need to identify the students who would not have been admitted but for the new criteria. We have done this in Table 3, which consists of two parts. First, it presents the percentages of each group's members who were admitted as a result of open admissions. Second, it presents each group's percentage of the total number of beneficiaries. These two kinds of percentages are presented for each level of CUNY and for CUNY as a whole.[15] Four groups are considered: blacks, Hispanics, Jews and Catholics.

As the changes in the racial composition of CUNY previously reviewed imply, larger proportions of blacks and Hispanics than of Jews and Catholics were admitted to CUNY and to its senior college system under open admissions. The differences between minority groups and the traditional beneficiaries of CUNY education were largest at the elite senior colleges, where over half of the black students in each cohort were admitted under the new criteria as compared with 20%

TABLE 3

HOW ETHNIC GROUPS BENEFITTED FROM OPEN ADMISSIONS
(Source: sample data)

% of group[a] benefitting from open admissions at...

	type of college					
	elite senior[c]	other senior[c]	all senior[c]	community[d]	all of CUNY[e]	Sample N
	----------1970----------					
Jews	15	69	27	70	19	(4378)
Catholics[f]	20	61	36	53	26	(4723)
Blacks	66	91	78	70	59	(1098)
Hispanics	40	71	51	56	36	(1026)
	----------1971----------					
Jews	6	46	26	65	30	(1551)
Catholics[f]	12	45	35	51	32	(2567)
Blacks	54	76	73	76	72	(1220)
Hispanics	33	63	60	63	53	(784)
	----------1972----------					
Whites	9	59	27	60	42	(7666)
Blacks	55	84	72	77	70	(2141)
Hispanics	46	69	58	59	51	(1258)

TABLE 3 (cont.)

HOW ETHNIC GROUPS BENEFITTED FROM OPEN ADMISSIONS

% of all beneficiaries[b] belonging to group at...

	elite senior[c]	other senior[c]	all senior[c]	community[d]	all of CUNY[e]
			1970		
Jews	33	30	31	21	23
Catholics[f]	26	38	33	39	35
Blacks	14	13	13	16	18
Hispanics	11	8	10	10	10
Other[g]	15	11	13	13	14
			1971		
Jews	25	23	23	16[h]	16[h]
Catholics[f]	36	38	38	29[h]	28[h]
Blacks	13	15	15	25	26
Hispanics	5	10	10	13	12
Other[g]	21	14	15	18	18
			1972		
Whites	45	65	60	59	57
Blacks	29	20	23	27	28
Hispanics	21	11	14	11	12
Other[g]	4	3	3	3	3

[a] The base for each percentage is the number of students from a given ethnic group at a specific level of CUNY.

[b] The base for each percentage is the number of open admissions students at a given level of CUNY. Percentages in each column may not add to 100% due to rounding.

[c] At the senior college level, open admission students are defined as those with high school averages below 80.

d
At the community college level, open admissions students are defined as those with high school averages below 75.

e
For all of CUNY, open admissions students are defined as those who would not have been placed at any level of CUNY by traditional criteria - in other words, those with high school averages below 75.

f
We remind the reader that throughout the paper the term "Catholics" refers to non-Hispanic Catholics.

g
The "other" row indicates the percentages of open admissions students who do not belong to the distinguished groups. In 1970 and 1971, these students may be Protestant whites, whites of some other or no religion, whites of unknown religion, Asian-Americans or other non-whites. In 1972, these other students may be Asian-Americans or other non-whites. None of these categories consistently contributes more than a few percentage points to the ranks of open admissions students.

h
These percentages are adjusted to compensate for the absence of religious data at one community college.

or fewer of Jews and Catholics. The disparity is much smaller at the other senior colleges, where large percentages of every group were admitted under open admissions. Finally, the disparity disappears at the community colleges, where--in great contrast to the senior colleges--the proportion of Jews admitted by the new criteria was one of the two largest.

When we consider the percentage each group forms among all beneficiaries, a very different impression of benefit results. As the Table shows, open-admissions Jewish and Catholic students generally outnumbered open-admissions blacks and Hispanics at CUNY and all its levels. One aspect of the extent to which white ethnics benefitted is especially striking. Many have previously recognized that whites have been important beneficiaries, but they have--with considerable unanimity--pointed to Catholic ethnics as the white beneficiaries. But it is clear that Jews were also major beneficiaries of open admissions, even at the senior college levels. Over a quarter of Jewish students at the senior colleges would not have been admitted but for open admissions.

In sum, these two types of percentages convey different but ultimately consistent aspects of the consequences of open admissions. Since so few blacks and Hispanics qualified for CUNY and its senior colleges under the older criteria, open admissions had a powerful impact on the racial composition of CUNY. But more whites than minority students benefitted from open admissions, at least for the years 1970 through 72.

To summarize our discussion of benefit, open admissions did provide important access to the City University of New York and its senior colleges for minority students. Not only did large proportions of minority students at the senior colleges enter under the new admissions criteria, but additional analyses (not shown here) indicate that these minority open admissions students frequently came from impoverished families. As a group, they were far more impoverished than the

white students who benefitted from open admissions and also more impoverished than those minority students who could satisfy the old admissions criteria. But more white than minority students benefitted from open admissions, and these white beneficiaries appear to have come from the same class backgrounds that traditionally provided CUNY with its students. Ironically, then, when the doors of the prestigious senior college system were opened to students who did not meet the traditional criteria for admission, it was not only the apparent objects of the open admissions policy, low-income minority students, who crowded in but also students from the groups which have historically benefitted most from CUNY education, working-and middle-class Catholics and Jews.

DETERMINANTS OF COLLEGE PLACEMENT

While stratification in the distribution of minority students diminished under open admissions, it is clear that some did exist, particularly between the elite and non-elite senior colleges. Since the internal stratification of higher education has played such an important role in some discussions of open admissions, as one mechanism by which class and ethnic inequality would be preserved in an apparently open system, it is important to look for the sources of the stratification which remained.

In the great majority of cases, the immediate cause of the student's placement was his or her own preferred college, indicated in application for admission to CUNY. Comparing preferences with placements for the years 1970, '71 and '72, most students in all ethnic groups were placed <u>at the level</u> of their preferred college (in terms of the three tiers used earlier), if not at that college itself. In 1970, nearly 87% of students in the sample were placed at their preferred level, as was true for nearly 80% in 1971 and 77% in 1972. Moreover, the rate of placement at the student's preferred level varied little by ethnic group in any year.

As one might guess, then, from the stratification of minority students in Table 1 for these three years, substantial differences in college preference existed among groups. Table 4 shows the college preferences of ethnic groups in each of these years. Because the representation of community and senior colleges in our samples varies from year to year, it is especially important in this Table--the only one where level of college is not controlled--to pay attention to the pattern of ethnic differences rather than the magnitudes of individual percentages. And, as is easily seen, there is a consistent pattern. Jewish students aimed the highest in the two years for which religious data are available, with the largest percentages preferring an elite senior college and the smallest choosing a community college. Blacks and Hispanics fell equally far behind Catholics and Jews in preference for an elite senior college or, indeed, any senior college.[16]

Despite the obvious importance of the student's preferences, it is still possible that the CUNY admissions process was partially responsible for the unequal distribution of minority students. That is, it is possible that unfavorable rates of minority admission to senior colleges are hidden in their generally high rates of placement at their preferred level, since minority students had a greater preference for community colleges, where they could not fail to get in under open admissions. Some confirmation seems added when we look at ethnic rates of admission to elite and non-elite senior colleges in the aggregate, also shown in Table 4. Without taking high school average and rank into account, blacks were the worst off in each cohort. Hispanics, however, did as well as Catholics in 1970 and all whites in 1972, lagging far behind the white groups only in 1971.

But a very different picture of the admissions process is revealed when we take into account high school average and rank, the two factors on which the formal admissions criteria depended. Comparing students equal in high school credentials,

TABLE 4

COLLEGE PREFERENCE AND RATE OF ADMISSION TO PREFERRED LEVEL BY ETHNIC GROUP
(source: sample data)

	College Preferences			Rate of Admission According To Preferred Level[a]		
	elite senior	other senior	community	elite senior	other senior	community
	----------1970----------					
Jews	74	13	13	88	96	100
Catholics	51	19	30	73	94	100
Blacks	37	16	47	63	86	100
Hispanics	44	16	40	81	94	100
	----------1971----------					
Jews	54	25	21	65	86	100
Catholics	29	33	39	54	84	100
Blacks	15	17	68	16	59	100
Hispanics	11	21	69	22	77	100
	----------1972----------					
Whites	42	13	45	51	69	100
Blacks	22	11	67	32	60	100
Hispanics	21	12	67	49	75	100

[a] In calculating rates of admission, a few students who were placed at higher levels than they preferred (e.g., students placed at senior colleges, although their preferred colleges were community colleges) have been counted as placed at their preferred level.

blacks and Hispanics were not disadvantaged relative to Jews and Catholics. In 1972, in fact, they were distinctly advantaged by comparison with whites in senior college admissions. In that year, among those with a high school average between 75 and 79.9 and in the top half of their class, over two-thirds of blacks and Hispanics who preferred admission to an elite senior college were placed at one, compared with less than one-third of equivalently qualified whites. Further, less than 20% of these same blacks and Hispanics were placed at a community college, while over 40% of the same whites were. Other differences in favor of minority admission are found among open admissions students desiring senior college admission in 1972. Given the limitations of our data, we cannot precisely specify the source of minority advantage in that year. However, we speculate that it results from those minority students who applied for admission to the SEEK program but who, under its lottery admissions procedure were not accepted. These students were more likely to list only senior colleges among their preferences, thereby increasing their chances of being admitted to one. Many whites, on the other hand, listed community colleges as a second or third choice, thus being admitted to that level if they did not receive their first choice.[17] But, whatever the source, the admissions process clearly did not work against minority students in any simple discriminatory way.

To understand the stratification of minority students, we must turn to events prior to CUNY, particularly to those which influenced the student's college preference. To be sure, ethnic groups also differed substantially in their academic credentials at the time of application to CUNY, in ways that are important for understanding the placement of students. Nonetheless, open enrollment was clearly designed to encourage minority admissions, particularly among those who lacked the traditional criteria. Why, then, were blacks and Hispanics so much less likely than whites to apply for admission to a senior college?

High school tracking looms large in many discussions of education as a mechanism for reproducing social inequality. It is well known that race and social class are related to track placement, and research suggests that this occurs in part independently of ability and achievement.[18] Black and Hispanic students are more likely to be placed in non-academic high school tracks, and this has important consequences, especially for subsequent education. In fact, one study found that track in high school was more important than ability in determining whether students went to college, or, if they did, whether they enrolled in a four- or two-year institution.[19] It appears that such results are determined by the effects of tracking on aspiration levels and self-esteem, and are reinforced by the influence of high school guidance counselors. We think that counselors are of prime importance in the New York situation. They possess considerable knowledge of the CUNY admissions process, and usually provide crucial advice for the student filling out the application, particularly regarding the colleges where he or she can expect to get in.

We have examined some possible determinants of college preference. A regression analysis shows that, for the 1970 freshmen, high school program (whether academic or not) and high school average explain most of the differences in college preference between minority and non-minority groups. Three measures of family background, father's and mother's education and family income, explain very little of college preference.[20]

These results point to the role of the high school program in explaining group differences in college preference. Surely, non-academic high school programs (and, of course, vocational high schools) are marked by a general atmosphere which is less conducive to high educational aspirations. Within such settings, we think the role of guidance counselors takes on added importance, especially since their impact on lower class students is greater than upon

middle class pupils.[21] It seems likely to us that guidance counselors, who play such a crucial role in helping students apply to CUNY, more easily think of those in non-academic programs as poor material for higher education and counsel them accordingly.[22]

In summary, the distribution of minority groups at CUNY became more equal as a result of open admissions. Relative to other open access systems CUNY was certainly far less stratified. Nonetheless, some stratification did remain. However, the responsibility for the remaining inequality in the initial placement of students does not appear to lie primarily with policies and procedures under the control of the CUNY administration, but rather with prior educational processing of students. From the evidence we have been able to analyze, we cannot reject some of the mechanisms, such as the link between guidance counselors and college preferences, posited by those who see a new form of tracking in open admissions. Our analyses testify to the limitations inherent in policy changes at any one level of the educational system in order to generate equality of educational opportunity. While CUNY open admissions policies had substantial effects, the impact of stratification at preceding levels of the system, in high schools and elementary schools, continued to be felt.

BENEFITS OF ACCESS: CURRICULUM PLACEMENT

The issue of educational stratification extends beyond the college tier in which a student is initially placed. Not only does enrollment in a senior or community college have important consequences for subsequent educational benefits, but so too does curriculum placement, especially for those who begin at a community college. Although the CUNY open admissions policy guaranteed mobility from the

community colleges to the senior for those completing the Associate degree, it does not follow that all curricular paths were equally likely to lead to the senior colleges. In the community colleges there are essentially two curricular paths, the liberal arts transfer curricula and the technical-vocational.

Some writers have viewed community colleges and especially the vocational curricula as crucial to the paradoxical description of open access education systems as maintainers of inequality.[23] These curricula are characterized as "dead end" programs, accomplishing the cooling out function of education: offering students the illusion of opportunity, while reconciling them to terminal curricula and the resulting limited occupational and financial benefits.[24] And usually these curricula are viewed as imposed upon students who would choose otherwise if they could.[25]

Our examination of the curriculum placement of community college students at CUNY shows that, as in the case of college placement, the vast majority of students were placed in their curriculum of choice, at least in terms of the distinction between liberal arts and vocational. Table 5 shows the preferred curricula of community college students by ethnic group, controlling for high school average.[26] It is obvious that there are fairly consistent differences among ethnic groups across the three cohorts. Jews and Catholics in 1970 and '71 and whites in 1972 were more likely to refer a liberal arts curriculum than were blacks and Hispanics. Often the differences between the white and minority groups were substantial, and they appear to have been larger for regular students than for open admissions students.

The data also contain a surprise which further confounds any simple interpretation of vocational curricula as a track of limited potential imposed upon unwilling students: in general, academically <u>stronger</u> students were less likely to

TABLE 5

PREFERRED CURRICULA OF ETHNIC GROUPS IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES, BY ADMISSIONS STATUS
(Source: Sample data)

	% choosing liberal arts[a]	
	regular	open
	----------1970----------	
Jews	48	46
Catholics	46	44
Blacks	15	32
Hispanics	19	31
	----------1971----------	
Jews	40	38
Catholics	35	32
Blacks	19	25
Hispanics	12	26
	----------1972----------	
Whites	33	43
Blacks	18	28
Hispanics	17	26

[a] Pre-engineering curricula are also included.

choose liberal arts curricula. This is especially clear for minority students, as a comparison of regular to open admissions students shows. Although the same pattern does not appear in Table 5 among Jews and Catholics in 1970 and '71, it is found among whites in the 1972 cohort. Moreover, among Jews and Catholics the very top students (those with above 80 high school averages, who are not shown separately in the Table) were often less likely to opt for liberal arts than were their academically poorer counterparts.

How is one to interpret such a finding, which flies in the face of the common sense expectation that better students should be more likely to prefer the liberal arts transfer programs? Undoubtedly, it arises largely because many students do not "drift into" vocational curricula in the community colleges but choose them consciously in accordance with occupational goals. That there is some fit between curriculum preference and occupational goals can be seen in the relationship between that preference and degree aspirations: our analyses show that those who wanted to terminate their education with an Associate degree were far more likely to choose a technical-vocational curriculum than were those who aspired to the B.A. or beyond.

Oddly, it appears that the liberal arts curriculum was the residual one for many students. Academically better students are more likely to be well informed about the career implications of different curricula. Thus, the greater preference for liberal arts among academically wearke students fuggest that it was a curriculum of "last resort" for many students, who chose it because they initially lacked any clear direction in their academic careers. Or perhaps, since the possibility of college attendance was not apparent for the weaker students in the early open admissions cohorts until late in their high school careers, they were more likely to approach this sudden possibility with unlimited aspirations.

Nonetheless, the curriculum preferences of these community college students also show the impact of prior educational processing. Paralleling the pattern we

found in college preference, students coming from non-academic high school programs were far less likely to prefer a liberal arts curriculum than were students from academic programs. Even so, this apparent effect of prior educational track does not work in quite the way one might expect. If the impact of non-academic high schools on curriculum preference were primarily a result of the lowered academic self-image of students or the directing of students by guidance counselors, then the academically least able students from non-academic programs ought to have been very unlikely to choose liberal arts curricula by comparison with academically better students from these programs. But they were not; they were, in fact, slightly more likely.[27]

It is apparent from our discussion that the process of curriculum placement in community colleges is considerably more complex than is usually described in critical analyses of the role of these institutions. As these analyses would lead one to suspect, it was the case at CUNY under open admissions that minority students were more likely to be found in the technical-vocational curricula, curricula which are less likely to lead to a senior college. Nevertheless, student preferences are the key elements in understanding the pattern of curriculum placement. And, even though the effects of high school tracking are apparent, it is impossible to see the vocational curricula as simply impositions on students who would choose otherwise, since academically better students were often more likely to choose those curricula than were weaker students.

COMMUNITY-SENIOR COLLEGE MOBILITY

Unlike most multi-tiered systems of higher education, the CUNY system was explicity intended to guarantee mobility to senior colleges for those completing the community college program. Although we have seen that the open admissions

policy resulted in less ethnic stratification in the University, inequalities did remain in the distribution of ethnic groups into different levels of the system. The principle of guaranteed mobility was designed to provide yet another avenue to the baccalaureate.

How did groups differ in movement from the community to the senior colleges? Table 6 presents the rates of transfer to the senior colleges by ethnic group, according to community college curriculum, admission status, and whether or not the Associate degree was received. The data show, first of all, a clear ethnic ordering in total rates of community-senior college mobility. Among both regular and open admissions groups, Jewish students were most likely to transfer, followed by Catholics. Blacks and Hispanics showed the lowest rates, but exhibited no clear ordering relative to one another.

However, Table 6 also reveals that the transfer process and ethnic ordering are considerably more complex than these initial findings suggest. When we examine the most likely transfer path, graduation from the liberal arts curriculum, ethnic differences in transfer rates disappear in most cases, the main exceptions being the lower rates for Hispanics in 1971 and blacks in 1972. The magnitude of the transfer rates is also striking. In the 1970 cohort, generally two thirds or more of the liberal arts graduates subsequently enrolled in a senior college.[28] Especially noteworthy is the strong showing of open admissions students. Indeed, in several cases the transfer rates for open admissions students exceed those for the regulars. Overall, the findings suggest that the CUNY policy of encouraging transfer to four year programs did have its intended effect.

What happened to the graduates of the career programs? As one might expect from their lower degree aspirations, they were less likely to go on to a senior college than were the liberal arts graduates. Yet, a substantial minority did

TABLE 6

COMMUNITY-SENIOR COLLEGE TRANSFER RATES BY CURRICULUM, DEGREE, AND ADMISSIONS STATUS
(Source: sample data)
% transferred to a senior college

		regular		open			
		With Associate degree	Without degree	With Associate degree	Without degree	Overall Rate regular	Rate open
		----------1970 cohort----------					
Jews	liberal arts	67	37	79	31	38	34
	career	30	23	43	14		
Catholics	liberal arts	63	28	75	18	31	25
	career	28	11	37	11		
Blacks	liberal arts	60	15	81	18	17	21
	career	33	7	51	8		
Hispanics	liberal arts	67	23	76	13	27	17
	career	53	11	33	5		
		----------1971 cohort----------					
Jews	liberal arts	72	38	66	29	45	33
	career	43	22	48	8		
Catholics	liberal arts	64	30	66	16	32	23
	career	30	8	49	6		
Blacks	liberal arts	58	18	68	17	23	17
	career	34	11	37	5		
Hispanics	liberal arts	47	13	40	14	19	12
	career	36	8	14	5		
		----------1972 cohort----------					
Whites	liberal arts	48	18	56	12	21	17
	career	25	7	34	5		
Blacks	liberal arts	41	11	38	7	13	10
	career	24	7	35	4		
Hispanics	liberal arts	59	13	47	8	12	10
	career	25	3	37	4		

transfer. For example, in the 1970 cohort about a third (and sometimes more) of these career students chose to continue their studies after community college graduation. Again, it is noteworthy that ethnic differences are, with few exceptions, small and do not consistently favor any one ethnic group. Surprisingly, among the career graduates, the open admissions students were generally more likely to continue in a senior college than were the regular students.

Another large group of students did not obtain a community college degree. For this group the University made no guarantee of mobility to a senior college. Nevertheless, transferring occurred, particularly among the liberal arts majors. For example, among Jewish enrollees in liberal arts curricula in the 1970 cohort, almost 40% of the regular- and almost one-third of the open admissions students transferred. In the career curricula, transferring also occurred, though the rates were generally low. Among the non-degree attainers, some ethnic differences re-emerge. Basically, in both the liberal arts and career curricula, non-degree Jewish students were most likely to transfer. There is no consistent ordering among the other ethnic groups.

A seeming paradox emerges from the analysis of community-senior college mobility rates. On the one hand, there are clear ethnic differences in the aggregate rates of transfer. On the other hand, within the group most obviously intended as the transfer population, degree holders, the mobility rates are high (but of course much higher in liberal arts) and ethnic differences small. This apparent paradox is explained largely by the different curricular enrollment of ethnic groups and their distinct rates of degree attainment. White groups were more likely to be in liberal arts curricula, while blacks and Hispanics were more likely to be in the career curricula, with accompanying lower mobility rates. Inasmuch as placement was determined overwhelmingly by student preference, it is

apparent that ethnic differences in mobility were generated in part by the same process which determined curriculum placement. But, as we shall see, whites were also more likely to obtain an Associate degree and hence to follow the guaranteed route of mobility. Other contributions to overall ethnic differences, such as differences in rates of transfer among those without degrees, are small by comparison with these two major patterns.

We cannot leave this discussion of community-senior college mobility without considering the fate of the transfers. Table 7 presents the graduation, retention, and dropout rates of the transfers from the 1970 and 1971 cohorts. Overall, Jewish and Catholic students exhibited consistently higher graduation rates than blacks and Hispanics. However, when transfers who had not graduated but were still enrolled in a senior college are considered, the picture is somewhat changed: In every case blacks showed the highest retention rate of any group. The record of Hispanics was not as strong, although they were about as likely to have remained in a senior college as the white groups. This suggests that the initial ethnic differences in graduation rates were due at least in part to the slower rate of degree attainment among the non-white groups. Among all groups, no less than two-thirds (and in some cases more than three-fourths) were still working toward the B.A. in 1975.

What do these results indicate in light of the assertion that community colleges are mechanisms for terminating the education of the disadvantaged, while at the same time preserving the illusion of the American ideology of egalitarianism? This image of the community college seems difficult to reconcile, at least at CUNY, with the facts that a high percentage of the liberal arts graduates transferred and a substantial minority of career graduates (the supposed "terminal" track) did likewise and that open admissions graduates were at least as likely to transfer

TABLE 7

COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRANSFERS TO SENIOR COLLEGES: ENROLLMENT STATUS OF ETHNIC GROUPS (In percentages)

Ethnic Group	Open Admissions Students			Regular Students		
	Graduated	Retained	Dropout	Graduated	Retained	Dropout
1970 Cohort*						
Jewish	29	38	33	45	22	33
Catholic	26	37	36	40	27	33
Black	19	56	25	27	57	17
Hispanic	22	54	24	35	29	35
1971 Cohort*						
Jewish	17	63	20	17	67	17
Catholic	23	57	20	24	57	19
Black	11	71	18	13	71	16
Hispanic	15	54	30	12	61	28

*Graduation, Retention and Dropout rates are as of spring, 1975.

as regular students who graduated. Moreover, the rates of persistence after transfer seemed substantial. But the apparent implications of these findings must be tempered by the inequalities in the curricular distribution of white and non-white students and the limitations on mobility without an Associate degree, which stand out as impediments to fuller participation of minority groups in the baccalaureate programs. Thus, the unequal transfer and subsequent graduation rates of different ethnic groups did not compensate for their originally unequal placement at the different levels of CUNY. Rather, these rates added to the inequalities in the distribution of groups.

ACADEMIC SUCCESS: DROPOUT, GRADUATION AND GRADES

The primary aim of open access models prior to CUNY's has been simply to provide access: the academic events occurring after admission remain the responsibility of the student. One of the most important innovations in the CUNY open admissions policy was the University's committment to affect the full course of the student's college career. To the extent that students did poorly in their work or dropped out, the University failed to achieve one of its major open admissions goals. Thus, open admissions witnessed a shift in the burden of responsibility: it now rested not only with the student but also with the institution.

Of course in evaluating open admissions, satisfactory academic achievement should not be viewed simply as an end in itself. Strong academic performance increases the prospects for later occupational success. Attaining high grades in college carries with it a greater probability of acceptance for graduate training and the consequent opportunity for reaching the higher level professions (and in the community colleges high grades create a greater probability of achieving a

baccalaureate). Moreover, degree attainment carries with it the likelihood of greater earnings.[29] It is, therefore, of significance for long-term benefits to assess academic success among students in each ethnic group.

Grades

Before open admissions began, there were gloomy prophesies about its prospects for success. Some feared that open admissions students, with their weaker high school records, would stand little chance of performing satisfactorily. Others felt that, despite the University's commitment to massive programs of remediation, the political pressures stemming from the open admissions effort would lead to a dilution of academic standards, with the veneer of academic success concealing an underlying deterioration of rigor. The University thus found itself in a "no-win" situation. If students succeeded beyond expectations, it would be accused of lowering standards. If they failed, the gloomy prophets would, happily or not, see their fears confirmed.

At this juncture there is no definitive evidence to support the widely held belief that open admissions brought about a decline in standards. One university study[30] compared pre-and post-open admissions grading patterns at selected CUNY campuses. It found that grades declined on some campuses and increased at others. In any event discussions of academic standards have certainly not been limited to the CUNY setting. The topic of "grade inflation" has been widely discussed as a national phenomenon.[31] Thus, even if there were hard evidence of grade inflation at CUNY, it would be difficult to distinguish that attributable to open admissions from that generated by much broader currents.

What can be said of academic performance during the early years of the open admissions program? Table 8 shows ethnic differences in a traditional measure of that performance, cumulative grade point average, with those who ultimately

TABLE 8

CUMULATIVE GRADE POINT AVERAGE BY ADMISSIONS STATUS, SEPARATING DROPOUTS FROM OTHERS

(Source: Sample data)

	Senior Colleges			
	regular students		open admission students	
	dropout	other	dropout	other
	----------1970----------			
Jews	2.72	3.02	1.83	2.48
Catholics	2.18	2.88	1.47	2.47
Blacks	1.87	2.70	1.31	2.23
Hispanics	1.99	2.70	1.46	2.28
	----------1971----------			
Jews	2.74	3.07	1.91	2.53
Catholics	2.16	2.92	1.65	2.58
Blacks	2.30	2.64	1.61	2.27
Hispanics	1.91	2.60	1.59	2.42
	----------1972----------			
Whites	2.53	2.95	1.48	2.32
Blacks	1.85	2.57	1.29	2.10
Hispanics	1.83	2.48	1.37	2.12

TABLE 8 (cont.)

CUMULATIVE GRADE POINT AVERAGE BY ADMISSIONS STATUS, SEPARATING DROPOUTS FROM OTHERS

	Community Colleges			
	regular students		open admission students	
	dropout	other	dropout	other
	----------1970----------			
Jews	2.01	2.70	1.51	2.34
Catholics	1.75	2.80	1.32	2.40
Blacks	1.60	2.49	1.35	2.11
Hispanics	1.91	2.65	1.46	2.28
	----------1971----------			
Jews	2.50	2.78	1.70	2.40
Catholics	2.28	2.81	1.66	2.32
Blacks	1.90	2.52	1.54	2.01
Hispanics	2.01	2.54	1.67	2.14
	----------1972----------			
Whites	2.06	2.80	1.53	2.35
Blacks	1.77	2.47	1.43	2.02
Hispanics	1.84	2.59	1.55	2.11

dropped out separated from the rest (who had either graduated or were still in school by the spring of 1975) and open admissions students distinguished from those admitted under the regular criteria. The numbers reported in the Table are means based on a numerical scoring of letter grades ranging from 0 for an F to 4 for an A.

It is immediately clear from the Table that there were important differences in academic performance between dropouts and others. The distinction is worth some attention because it offers some indication of the way in which the academic system is handling students who are performing poorly. As evidence that such students were leaving the system, the mean grade point average of students who remained in school was above the minimum necessary for graduation, a C or 2.0 average, for all ethnic groups and for both regular and open admissions students.

There are some differences between regular and open admissions students in the performance of dropouts. Among open admissions dropouts at both senior and community colleges, every ethnic group had compiled a mean grade point average lower than the minimum necessary for graduation. Thus, it is even clearer that students who were not doing well were likely to leave the University, although, to be sure, most were probably not expelled but became discouraged and left of their own accord. The picture is rather different for the regular students. Here we find that many of the Jews and Catholics who dropped out had satisfactory grade point averages, suggesting that some were not dropping out of college but transferring outside the CUNY system.[32] On the other hand, among blacks and Hispanics, dropouts were not performing at minimally satisfactory levels.

Looking now at the students who remained in school, there appear to be substantial differences in performance among the categories of students represented in the Table. For one, regular students were outperforming open admissions students at both senior and community colleges. For another, there are quite consistent differences between two clusters of ethnic groups. Jewish and Catholic students earned consistently higher grade point averages than blacks and Hispanics.

Differences in grades appear to be more strongly related to high school average, and hence to admissions status, than to ethnicity. Differences between regular and open admissions students from the same ethnic group are generally as strong as or stronger than the largest differences among ethnic groups in the same category of admissions status. Indeed, using these latter as its measure, ethnic variation does not seem very large. few differences among groups in any category of admissions status are more than a third of a point, which is equivalent to the difference between a letter grade and its plus or minus. Nevertheless, the combined effects of high school average, or admissions status, and ethnicity are quite substantial. The difference in any year between the regular students from the highest achieving ethnic group and the open admissions students from the poorest achieving group is often near a full point, or a full letter grade.

It is, of course, impossible in the absence of any independent standard to say anything definitive about grade inflation under open admissions. Nonetheless, the patterns in Table 8 do not suggest the collapse of academic standards but rather their maintenance. Many students did poorly, and consequently dropped out, and success at CUNY was strongly related to high school performance. Obviously, these points raise the question of whether open admissions was a failure because the poorly prepared non-traditional students admitted under the new program simply flunked out. We postpone that assessment until after a fuller discussion of dropout and graduation.

Dropout and Graduation

Dropout and graduation are frequently viewed both by colleges and students as the bottom line of educational accounting. The ultimate aim of the CUNY open admissions policy was to provide a take-off point for social mobility through the

vehicle of higher education. In particular, open admissions was seen as a primary means for interrupting the poverty cycle characterizing the life situations of many of the new students admitted under the policy. Within this context, dropout and graduation are probably the most significant indicators for assessing the results of open admissions.

Table 9 presents the rates of dropout and graduation for each ethnic group by level of entry (senior or community) and admissions status (open or regular admissions).[33] With regard to dropout rates, there is a broadly consistent ethnic pattern. Jewish students emerge as the group least likely to drop out. At the other end, Hispanic students appear to be generally the most likely to have dropped out, but the differences between Hispanics and others are very strong only in the senior colleges. Blacks and Catholics fall in the middle and there is little difference between them, except that black regular community college students were more likely to drop out than their Catholic peers. Despite this broad ethnic pattern, it is also important to note the frequent absence of large or consistent differences between whites and non-whites, especially in the community colleges. Thus, in 1972, whites and blacks appear roughly equal in rate of dropout, although some differences appear among regular students when the grade point averages of dropouts are taken into consideration.

With regard to graduation rates, the pattern of ethnic differences varies between the senior and community colleges. In the senior colleges, a consistent rank order is present for the 1970 and'71 cohorts and for both regular and open admissions students. The highest rate is shown by Jewish students, followed in descending order by Catholics, blakcs, and Hispanics. Differences among ethnic groups seem somewhat greater than did differences in dropout rates, and the HIspanic graduation rate is, in most cases, sharply lower than those of the other groups. In the community colleges the sharpest contrast appears between white and

non-white ethnics. Jews and Catholics have very similar graduation rates, and these are higher than the rates for blacks and Hispanics, which are in turn quite similar. The magnitudes of ethnic differences, however, are smaller than those found in the senior colleges.

Overall, how do the graduation and dropout rates of CUNY's major ethnic constituencies reflect upon the University's goal of stopping the revolving door? No specific rate of dropout or graduation has ever been defined as an indicator of success, but one approach is to compare the CUNY results with national data, which are also presented in Table 9.[34] This comparison requires caution, however. We know that our samples contain slightly higher proportions of academically successful students than do the populations from which they were drawn (see the Appendix). In the case of the 1971 cohort, the magnitude of the bias in the sample is large enough that we have chosen to omit it from the comparison to national data.[35]

Despite the need for caution, this comparison has a number of interesting aspects. Even allowing for some bias in our samples, graduation rates of regular senior college students after <u>five</u> years (i.e., the graduation rates of the 1970 cohort) are near or even above the national graduation rate for every CUNY ethnic group except Hispanics, whose graduation rate is well below the national rate. Although it may seem inappropriate to compare a national rate, measured after four years, against a CUNY rate, measured after five, this is in some ways the most appropriate comparison. Because CUNY students were so often registered for remedial work offering little or no credit and because so many of them had to work while attending school, it is not at all surprising--ideed, it is to be expected--that a substantial proportion of CUNY students required more than the traditional four-year period to graduate. Thus, when the appropriate national rates are compared with four-year CUNY rates for regular senior college students

TABLE 9

GRADUATION, RETENTION, AND DROPOUT RATES: CUNY AND NATIONAL DATA

SENIOR COLLEGES

	Regular			Open Admissions		
	Graduated	Retained	Dropout	Graduated	Retained	Dropout
1970 Cohort						
Jewish	57	10	33	37	18	45
Catholic	49	12	39	29	13	58
Black	48	14	38	23	21	56
Hispanic	34	18	48	19	22	59
1971 Cohort						
Jewish	43	33	24	23	37	40
Catholic	36	34	30	20	36	44
Black	30	40	30	18	43	39
Hispanic	19	38	43	7	26	67
National Data	49	9	42	21	14	65

COMMUNITY COLLEGES

1970 Cohort						
Jewish	45	8	47	29	10	61
Catholic	47	6	47	26	7	67
Black	32	10	58	20	13	67
Hispanic	35	10	55	21	7	72
1971 Cohort						
Jewish	50	16	34	34	15	51
Catholic	47	12	41	28	12	60
Black	37	14	49	19	20	61
Hispanic	37	8	55	19	16	65
1972 Cohort						
White	41	19	40	21	23	56
Black	29	30	41	16	28	56
Hispanic	30	25	45	16	28	56
National Data	32	2	66	20	3	77

in the 1970 cohort (not shown here), differences in graduation rates are complemented by differences in the percentages of students still attending school. At the national level, only 9% of students were still in school after four years, while at CUNY a third or more of the students from each ethnic group remained after four years. It follows that the national graduation rate could not increase much after four years, but our analysis shows that the CUNY graduation rate changed substantially between the fourth and fifth year.[36]

In light of this discussion, CUNY open admissions students in the senior colleges appear rather successful by the measure of their peers nationwide. Even allowing for sampling bias, the graduation rates of Jews and Catholics are higher than the national rate, and the graduation rate of blacks is near it. Only the Hispanic graduation rate is clearly below it. As in the case of regular students, the percentages of students who remained in school were generally higher at CUNY--only Catholics were an exception--than was true nationally. Thus, it is likely that the graduation rates of all groups overtook the national rate in the sixth and subsequent years.

These considerations also shed some light on the graduation rates of Hispanics. They are the one group whose record clearly falls below the national figures. However, about a fifth of Hispanic senior college students remained in school after five years, suggesting that their low graduation rates are attributable not only to academic failure and discouragement, but also to slowness of progress toward a degree. Part of their slowness may be attributed to the fact that English is not their native language. In addition since most are Puerto Ricans, who as a group retain important ties to the island society which is their homeland, it is possible that their school careers are slowed often by interruptions arising from returns to the Island.

Comparison of CUNY community college students with their national counterparts reveals a number of striking findings. To begin with, graduation rates for the national sample of students appear low in absolute terms. Only three in ten of those comparable to regular CUNY students and two in ten comparable to open admissions students graduated from community college four years after entry. These rates are clearly exceeded by the CUNY graduation rates of Jews and Catholics in 1970 and of whites in 1972. Although the graduation rates of blacks and Hispanics in these cohorts are probably below the national rates when sampling bias is taken into account, any disparities in favor of the national rates are more than counter-balanced by the most striking the CUNY situation: the extent to which students were still enrolled four and five years after matriculation. Nationally, there were few such students; less than 3% overall. Thus, the national graduation rate could change only insignificantly in the fifth and subsequent years. But in every comparison, i.e., for each ethnic group and in each cohort, a greater percentage of students was retained at CUNY than was true nationally; often, the difference is considerable. It appears that the ultimate national graduation rate from community colleges is certain to have been eclipsed by the ultimate graduation rate of each CUNY ethnic group, Hispanics included.

In sum, CUNY students in the era of open admissions generally did well by comparison to a national yardstick. Relative to national norms, and allowing for their somewhat slower progress toward a degree, CUNY senior college open admissions students compared favorably with their national peers; and, with the important exception of Hispanics, regular students in CUNY's senior colleges were nearly on a par with them. In CUNY's community colleges, both open admissions and regular students did well by comparison with community college

students nationwide. However, open admissions clearly did not eradicate ethnic differences in educational attainment. Even when high school performance is controlled, relatively consistent and sometimes large differences are visible in ethnic rates of success. Broadly speaking, in the senior colleges Jewish students were most successful and Hispanic students were least. And in the community colleges the white groups were generally more successful than the blacks and Hispanics.

CONCLUSION

The CUNY open admissions policy has been in many respects American higher education's most ambitious effort to provide equality of educational opportunity. Arising in large measure from the demands of educationally disadvantaged ethnic groups, it provided access to college for many who previously would have had no chance at all, and serious efforts were made to aid the new students in their careers at CUNY. Enough time has now passed so that we may begin addressing the question: Has open admissions worked? Given the central role of ethnicity in the original conception of the policy, that question cannot be considered without also considering another: Did the policy work better for some groups than for others?

Without question, many who otherwise would not have gone to college went to CUNY as open admissions students. In the program's first year over half the blacks and more than a third of the Hispanics would not have qualified for any level of CUNY by the traditional admissions standards, and these fractions do not include those students who possessed the traditional academic criteria but came to college only because open admissions encouraged them to believe that CUNY was open to them. Of course, the open admissions policy was designed to bring about just such results, but

in so doing it also brought substantial benefits to whites, who, in fact, comprised the majority of open admissions students.

Further evidence for the egalitarian impact of the policy lies in the distribution of minority students across the community and senior college levels. Not only was access to CUNY increased absolutely, but the resulting increased ethnic integration occurred at all levels of the system. Indeed, the ethnic imbalance existing at CUNY in the pre-open admissions period was greater than it ever was subsequently. The CUNY situation does not, therefore, provide support for those who have asserted that increased access to higher education is offset by increasing internal stratification of the system.

Considering the actual achievements of open admissions students throughout their CUNY careers, they appear to have done well relative to national yardsticks for dropout and graduation rates. By these standards, open admissions at CUNY was no revolving door. Not only did thousands of students enter college as a result, but thousands also graduated. As an example, of those open admissions students who enrolled at CUNY in 1970, approximately one-quarter or roughly 3,600 students, had graduated with some degree by 1975. And an additional 1,800, or about 12%, were still working toward a degree.

Nevertheless, a simple yes or no answer to the question of whether open admissions worked is not possible, for inequality remained at CUNY in the era of open admissions. Even though giant strides were made toward the ethnic integration of the University, some inequalities remained in the distribution of minority students across levels. Six years after open admissions began, black and Hispanic students were still more likely--albeit only slightly--to be found in the community colleges, and minority students at the senior college level were distinctly less likely to be found in the elite schools. True, our analyses have demonstrated that these remaining

imbalances seem more a function of student preferences than the mechanics of CUNY admissions procedures. But these preferences are, to a large degree, outcomes of the cumulative impact of past inequalities, quite possibly including the prior tracking of students. And what holds true for enrollment at different levels of the University applies as well to curriculum placement in the community colleges, a strategic issue in terms of the long-run implications of the initial academic contexts in which students find themselves.

That white students remained comparatively advantaged in CUNY under open admissions seems even clearer when we look at ethnic differences in achievement. Importantly, student performance at CUNY, whether measured in grades, dropout or graduation, is predicted rather well by high school performance. Although this relationship is quite unsurprising, it has important implications for ethnic inequality in the CUNY context. Thus, regular students generally outperformed open admissions students, and whites were more likely than non-whites to be regular students. Given these facts, whites predictably outperformed blacks and Hispanics, overall. And there are even ethnic differences among the most strategic group, open admissions students. While these differences are often small and sometimes inconsistent, white open admissions students were better off, broadly speaking, than non-whites in grades, dropout and graduation. And the cumulative impact of these differences is much larger than any single one of them.

The paradox of open admissions is one that it probably shares with many other meliorative reforms. While benefits do flow to those intended to receive them, they also flow unintentionally to others; and often the latter, possessing more resources than the former, are better able to take advantage of the new opportunities. Without question every ethnic group benefitted from open admissions. The benefits to blacks and Hispanics were substantial, and CUNY changed appreciably (e.g., in ethnic integration) as a result. But the benefits to whites, both Jews and Catholics, were even more substantial in some ways.

In considering the consequences of open admissions, we must address directly the fear and controversy the policy aroused. Some felt all along that no favorable results of open admissions could outweigh the inevitable erosion of academic standards. Certainly many CUNY faculty feared this would happen, even though we have noted the absence of any clear evidence on this point. Although an early study indicated strong support for open admissions among both faculty and administrators,[37] we suspect that additional faculty exposure, not only to open admissions students, but to the accompanying conditions of overcrowding, increased class size, and the subsequent effects of the New York City fiscal crisis, led to a decline in support. In some cases there were strong feelings of demoralization.[38]

On the scale practiced at CUNY, open admissions required considerable faculty adaptation in terms of teaching methods and commitments of additional time for working with students. For many, these demands were experienced as stressful. In earlier days, when the "proletarian Harvard" was an appropriate label for City College, faculty took great pride in the subsequent accomplishments of the graduates they had "produced." It is questionable whether the achievements of the graduates could be attributed very clearly to the quality of the faculty. Nevertheless, with an influx of poorly prepared and culturally foreign students, it is understandable that faculty would find the changed situation very threatening to their own sense of status. Without dismissing the validity of the standards issue, much of the controversy appears understandable in these terms.

Moreover, the concern over standards, whether realistic or not, may have had real consequences. If people believe that standards have declined, then they are also likely to feel that a CUNY degree is "worth" less. Such beliefs may have

negatively affected the hiring of CUNY graduates, although at this juncture there is no evidence to allow us to determine whether this has happened. The occupational destinations of CUNY graduates is a topic needing systematic research.[39]

Finally, no discussion of open admissions and the fate of ethnic groups is complete without allusion to the fiscal crisis of New York. Whatever the degree of controversy over the feasibility of open admissions, the fiscal crisis unquestionably intensified it. Indeed, in late 1975 the CUNY Board of Higher Education approved resolutions which would have gone a long way toward dismantling the entire structure of open admissions. While these drastic resolutions were later rescinded, open admissions has been changed by the political heat of the fiscal crisis.[40]

This educational experiment no longer exists in the precise form we have described. Some changes have been made in the formal structure of the program. For example, the criteria for admission to a senior college are now somewhat more selective. Before, students needed an 80 average or rank in the top 50% to qualify; now, rank in the top 35% is required. But much more important are the ways in which the shrinking financial resources of the University have affected the implementation and workings of the program. The impact of faculty retrenchment has hit hardest at those staff providing the remedial and counseling support services so important to the open admissions effort. And, crucially, free tuition has been abolished, with consequences made more dire by the information gap resulting from the retrenchment of high school guidance counselors.[41] All of these events have combined to create a widespread public perception that open admissions is over. The result has been greatly decreased enrollment among all groups.

The future of open admissions--whether it will suffer from further cut backs--remains clouded by uncertainties regarding CUNY's future base of fiscal

support. While we think that the initial years of open admissions gave cause for considerable optimism about its success, the future of the policy and its goals appears gloomy. For when fiscal pressures were overwhelming, political leaders responded by supporting exactly those alternatives which attacked the student constituencies most directly served by open admissions.

APPENDIX: QUALITY OF THE SAMPLE DATA

The aim of this paper is to compare ethnic groups in terms of significant outcomes of the open admissions policy. Implicitly, we are generalizing to the student populations from which our samples are drawn, and it is therefore important to assess the samples' representativeness by comparing them to these populations, using variables measured for both. Some sample and population data are presented in Table A.

Since the colleges represented in the samples vary from year to year, the most basic comparison involves the distribution of students between senior and community colleges. It is clear that there are large discrepancies between the samples and their populations, but not always in the same direction. Senior college students are overrepresented in the 1970 sample but greatly underrepresented in the 1971 and 1972 samples. These discrepancies do not affect most of our tables, since level of college is controlled in them. The one table where that is not true and therefore may be affected involves college preferences and admission rates (Table 4). For example, because the 1971 and 1972 samples contain disproportionate numbers of community college students, Table 4 overstates the percentages of students in those years who preferred senior colleges but were placed in community colleges (i.e., those who were placed in senior colleges are underrepresented). Nonetheless, we do not believe that our conclusions from this Table are affected because they are based on the pattern of ethnic differences and that pattern is consistent across the three samples, even though their biases lie in different directions.

Since most of our tables involve a control for level of college, additional comparisons between the samples and populations are best done with such a control, and the data for these comparisons are also presented in Table A.

One important variable is ethnicity. Here, the only available population measure is the percentage of minority students (i.e, the combined percentage of blacks and Hispanics) in each freshman class, taken from the ethnic census. It is clear from Table A that sample and population figures agree closely for both senior and community colleges in all three cohorts.

Another important variable is high school average, the basis for distinguishing open admissions from regular students and also one of the best predictors of academic performance in college. Examination of the population and sample distributions show that, overall, the samples contain a slightly higher proportion of more able students than do the populations. Broadly speaking, this bias is of small magnitude--usually involving a difference of only a few percentage points in each category of high school average. However, there are some instances where the discrepancies are larger. In the 1970 cohort, community college students in the sample were clearly a better group than the population from which they are drawn, as was also true of senior college students in the 1971 and 1972 samples. One consequence of these biases is that Table 3 somewhat understates the proportions of open admissions students in the community colleges in 1970 and in the senior colleges in 1971 and 1972. But again our conclusions from the Table are drawn on the basis of an ethnic pattern which is broadly consistent across the three cohorts. These biases also raise the possibility that the performance of sample students at CUNY was better than that for the populations as a whole. That possibility is best addressed by comparing samples and populations in terms of important performance variables.

One of these concerns mobility from community to senior colleges. As Table A shows, there is close correspondence for all three cohorts between sample and population transfer rates.

TABLE A

COMPARISON OF SAMPLE WITH POPULATION FOR SELECTED VARIABLES:
1970, 1971, & 1972 COHORTS

Cohort	High School Average <70	70-74.9	75-79.9	80+	Graduate	Dropout	Transfer Rate	$\bar{X}$ GPA Dropout	Other	% Minority	% Senior College	% Community College
1970:												
Total Pop.											58	42
Total Sample											69	32
Senior Pop.	4	11	24	60	39	47				11		
Senior Sample	4	9	23	64	44	42				13		
O.A. - Sen. Pop.	11	28	62	0	26	58		1.54	2.44			
O.A. - Sen. Sam.	10	26	64	0	30	53		1.57	2.43			
Reg. - Sen. Pop.	0	0	0	100	48	40		2.34	2.94			
Reg. - Sen. Sam.	0	0	0	100	52	37		2.43	2.95			
Comm. Pop.	33	34	23	11	28	64				27		
Comm. Sample	26	34	27	13	33	59				25		
O.A. - Comm. Pop.	49	51	0	0	23	67	24	1.49	2.31			
O.A. - Comm. Sam.	44	56	0	0	26	65	26	1.40	2.32			
Reg. - Comm. Pop.	0	0	68	32	39	54	29	1.89	2.72			
Reg. - Comm. Sam.	0	0	67	33	43	50	30	1.81	2.74			
1971:												
Total Pop.											54	46
Total Sample											38	62
Senior Pop.	5	13	24	59	21	44				18		
Senior Sample	5	8	24	63	30	35				14		
O.A. - Sen. Pop.	13	30	57	0	10	55		1.46	2.34			
O.A. - Sen. Sam.	13	21	66	0	19	44		1.68	2.49			
Reg. - Sen. Pop.	0	0	0	100	30	36		2.28	2.90			
Reg. - Sen. Sam.	0	0	0	100	37	29		2.40	2.97			
Comm. Pop.	35	32	23	11	25	61				33		
Comm. Sam.	32	33	24	12	31	54				36		
O.A. - Comm. Pop.	52	48	0	0	19	66	18	1.44	2.27			
O.A. - Comm. Sam.	49	51	0	0	25	59	21	1.68	2.27			
Reg. - Comm. Pop.	0	0	68	33	36	51	27	1.93	2.70			
Reg. - Comm. Sam.	0	0	66	34	43	44	30	2.21	2.74			

TABLE A (continued)

Cohort	High School Average 70	70-74.9	75-79.9	80+	Graduate	Dropout	Transfer Rate	$\bar{X}$ GPA Dropout	Other	% Minority	% Senior College	% Community College
1972:												
Total Pop.											55	45
Total Sample											30	71
Senior Pop.	7	14	24	55	1	40				18		
Senior Sample	3	10	23	64	1	33				21		
O.A. - Sen. Pop.	14	31	55	0	1	49		1.40	2.21			
O.A. - Sen. Sam.	9	27	65	0	1	44		1.42	2.23			
Reg. - Sen. Pop.	0	0	0	100	1	31		2.20	2.84			
Reg. - Sen. Sam.	0	0	0	100	1	26		2.43	2.91			
Comm. Pop.	35	30	21	13	21	54				40		
Comm. Sample	34	30	22	14	24	52				37		
O.A. - Comm. Pop.	54	46	0	0	16	58	12	1.50	2.23			
O.A. - Comm. Sam.	53	47	0	0	18	56	14	1.50	2.22			
Reg. - Comm. Pop.	0	0	62	39	33	45	17	2.00	2.71			
Reg. - Comm. Sam.	0	0	61	39	37	42	19	1.99	2.73			

Another variable is college grade point average (GPA). Table A presents mean GPA's separating students who dropped out from those who had graduated or were still enrolled as of June, 1975 (shown as "other"). There is close agreement between sample and population values among the persisting students. The largest difference occurs for senior college open admissions students in the 1971 cohort, where the performance of the sample is moderately better than that of the population. Among dropouts, there are some larger population-sample differences, especially among the 1971 freshmen. GPA's in the populations are generally a bit lower than those in the samples, suggesting that the extent to which "dropouts" transferred to institutions outside the CUNY system may have been less than the sample data imply.

Graduation and dropout rates are two further outcomes receiving major attention in our analyses. With regard to graduation rates, the comparisons in Table A show moderate and consistent differences between sample and population for the 1970 and 1972 cohorts: the sample graduation rates are higher by as much as five percentage points. For the 1971 cohort, the upward bias in the sample is greater than for the other cohorts, especially among senior college students. With regard to dropout rates, the same pattern holds in reverse: the rates for the samples are lower than for the populations, and the discrepancies are largest for the 1971 cohort. These biases are important because our conclusions concerning dropout and graduation rates involve not only ethnic patterns within our samples but also comparisons of our samples to national data. Importantly, the superiority of the CUNY record over the national is not as great as that implied by the samples. This qualification is noted in the discussion of dropout and graduation rates.

Overall, these comparisons show a close correspondence between samples and populations. Although the samples contain greater proportions of academically

able students and the CUNY performance of these students is in some respects better than that for the corresponding populations, we do not find grounds for skepticism concerning the conclusions we draw from the samples.

FOOTNOTES

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1. Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, Schooling in Capitalist America (New York: Basic Books, 1976). Other significant work is illustrated by the following: Jerome Karabel, "Community Colleges and Social Stratification," Harvard Educational Review, 1972, 42, pp. 521-562; Murray Milner, The Illusion of Equality, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1972); Ellen Trimberger, Open Admissions: A New Form of Tracking?", Insurgent Sociologist, 1973, 4, pp. 29-43. Concern with opportunity for higher education is, of course, not limited to critical theorists. See for example, William H. Sewell, "Inequality of Opportunity for Higher Education," American Sociological Review, 1971, 36, pp. 793-809.

2. The trend and issues are considered in Martin Trow, "Reflections on the Transition from Mass to Universal Higher Education," Daedalus, Winter, 1970, pp.1-42; and Universal Higher Education: Costs and Benefits (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1971).

3. In 1971 another four-year and another two-year college began.

4. More detailed description of the California system is presented in Abraham Jaffe and Walter Adams, "Two Models of Open Enrollment," in Universal Higher Education; See also David Rosen, Seth Brunner, and Steve Fowler, Open Admissions: The Promise and the Lie of Open Access to American Higher Education, (Study Commission on Undergraduate Education and the Education of Teachers, Lincoln; University of Nebraska, 1973).

5. For broad reviews of the dropout phenomenon, see Frank Newman, et. al., Report on Higher Education (Washington, D.C.: Department of Health, Education, and Welfare: Office of Education, 1971); Robert G. Cope and William Hannah, Revolving College Doors: The Causes and Consequences of Dropping Out, Stopping Out and Transferring (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1975); William G. Spady, "Dropouts from Higher Education: An Interdisciplinary Review and Synthesis," Interchange, 1970, 1, pp. 64-85; Vincent Tinto, "Dropout from Higher Education: A Theoretical Synthesis of Recent Research", Review of Educational Research, 1975, pp. 89-125.

6. In embarking on an open admissions policy, the CUNY Board stipulated that every college in the system should develop these supportive services, but the particular style of their implementation was left to the discretion of the individual colleges. There was considerable diversity in program development, especially in the criteria for placing students in compensatory courses and the extent to which credit was carried by these courses. There was also variation in the counseling services. Initially, some colleges developed an "outreach" approach, while others adhered to the traditional "psychiatric" model. Detailed description of the CUNY support services may be found in David E. Lavin, From Selective To Free Access Higher Education: Institutional Responses to Open Admissions At The City University of New York (New York: City University of New York September, 1976, Eric Document number: ED 129158).

While there is considerable descriptive information regarding the support services, research analysis of their effectiveness is scanty. A very early assessment suggested that students who received remediation were less likely to drop out. Some colleges have conducted evaluations, but by and large, these have suffered from inadequate research design and yield mixed results. Detailed analyses of the CUNY compensatory effort are now being conducted by the authors. The results will be reported in David E. Lavin, Richard A. Silberstein, and Richard D. Alba, Conflict and Opportunity: An Analysis of the Open Admissions Experiment at the City University of New York (New York: The Free Press, in preparation).

7. The 1970 survey was administered under the auspices of the American Council on Education, and under the direction of Alexander W. Astin. The 1971 and 1972 questionnaires were developed and administered under the direction of Lavin. For the most part they were administered either at registration or in required freshmen courses, especially English classes. Because a sampling design would have required considerable administrative effort at the campuses and their capacity to implement any sampling procedure was extremely limited, we decided that, paradoxically, it would be easier to attempt administering the questionnaire to all freshmen. Of course, many students did not respond, or were in class sections where questionnaires were not administered. Moreover, for a variety of reasons, not all colleges administered the survey in each year. For each freshman cohort the missing colleges are the following: 1970, Kingsborough Community and Hostos Community; 1971, City College, Baruch, Hunter, and Brooklyn; 1972, City College, Brooklyn, John Jay, Hostos. Also the special program SEEK and College Discovery students are not included in the survey data. This is not a disadvantage. Indeed, to include them in analysis of student academic outcomes would be inappropriate, since these special students received services and financial stipends at a level not offered to open admissions students.

   The number of students in the survey sample for each year are as follows: 1970, 13,525; 1971, 8,597; 1972, 13,133. The samples represent the following percentages of each year's entering cohort (excluding special program students): 43% (1970), 26% (1971), and 39% (1972).

   Because we had only limited control over the administration of the survey questionnaires, and because some colleges in each year did not administer it at all, it is possible that the survey data contain biases which might affect the results and interpretations. In order to assess this possibility, we have conducted some detailed comparisons of the samples with the populations, using several of the major variables measured in both. These comparisons are described in some detail in the Appendix. It is apparent from them that the samples contain greater proportions of academically able students and that the academic performance of these students was, in some respects, better than for the corresponding populations. However, it is important to note that in almost all cases, the superiority of the samples is only very slight, and thus there is little reason to suspect that findings from the samples are invalid. We will point out, however, instances where we believe findings need qualification because of possible sampling bias.

8. In reading the tables we present from these merged files, it must be remembered that they constitute only samples, albeit large ones, of three cohorts. Since the colleges represented in each sample vary somewhat from cohort to cohort, inter-cohort comparisons, such as trend analyses, are tenuous. Our primary purpose in using all three cohorts in our analyses is to bolster our conclusions, not only by using all available data, but also through the overall consistency of patterns across the cohort samples.

9. Our conclusions about the weakness of nationality differences within religious groups are drawn from analyses involving data about languages spoken at home (from the 1970 cohort). Surprisingly, over a quarter of the Jewish students reported Yiddish was spoken at home, and over a fifth of the non-Hispanic Catholics claimed Italian. Clearly, these language data do not identify all Jews of eastern European origins and all Catholics of Italian background. But, since they do identify students from families where ethnic subcultures are strong, it is reasonable to expect these students to be different from others in families where only English is spoken at home, if nationality differences are important. But our analyses of a wide variety of measures show students from Yiddish- or Italian-speaking families to be little different from their coreligionists, suggesting that nationality differences are weak.

10. The Hispanic category appears to be composed largely of individuals of Puerto Rican origin or ancestry. In the 1971 cohort, for example, where data about parents' nativities are available, 85% of those in the Hispanic category indicated fathers born in Puerto Rico. Since some of the 7% with mainland-born fathers are also of Puerto Rican ancestry, it would seem that Puerto Ricans composed about 90% of the Hispanic category in 1971.

11. After the 1971 questionnaire was administered, controversy developed regarding the use of the data on religion and national origin. The result was the deletion from the 1972 questionnaire of the relevant ethnic items.

12. We have borrowed the three-tier view of CUNY from Ellen Kay Trimberger, "Open Admissions: A New Form of Tracking?" However, we do not fully agree with her assignment of colleges. We have defined Brooklyn, City College, Hunter and Queens as the elite colleges and Baruch, John Jay, Lehman, Medgar Evers, and York as non-elite. It should be emphasized that, although there may be such a distinction between elite and non-elite colleges in the public perception, the distinction had no administrative legitimacy within CUNY during the period covered by this research.

13. Robert Birnbaum and J. Goldman, The Graduates: A Follow-up Study of New York City High School Graduates of 1970 (New York: Center for Social Research & Office for Research in Higher Education, City University of New York, 1971), pp. 67-69.

14. Abraham Jaffe and Walter Adams, "Two Models of Open Enrollment," p. 152.

15. The definition of "beneficiaries" of open admissions is straightforward. In senior colleges they consist of all students who enrolled with high school averages of less than 80. In community colleges they consist of those with averages of less than 75. In the ensuing discussion and tables, all others are designated as "regular" students, i.e., those who would have qualified for CUNY without open admissions.

    For these analyses, we use the samples of the first three entering cohorts, since the ethnic census does not record the students' high school averages.

16. It should be noted, however, that the differences between whites and non-whites may be exaggerated in the samples, since these lack special program students, who were more senior than community college oriented. We have made an attempt to adjust the samples for the omission of special program students, using the known distribution of the latter and assuming that they are placed at the level they prefer. Although the adjusted differences in preference between minority and white students are somewhat smaller than the raw differences in the samples, they are still large.

17. This description of the admissions process is based upon a discussion with CUNY Vice Chancellor J. Joseph Meng.

18. For a discussion which reviews much of the literature, primarily at the elementary and secondary levels, see Caroline Hodges Persell, Education and Inequality (new York: The Free Press, 1977), especially pp. 85-89. See also James E. Rosenbaum, Making Inequality: The Hidden Curriculum of High School Tracking (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1976).

19. Abraham Jaffe and Walter W. Adams, Academic and Socio-economic Factors Related to Entrance and Retention at Two-and Four-Year Colleges in the Late 1960's (New York: Bureau of Applied Social Research, Columbia University, 1970).

20. We have used the 1970 sample for this analysis because it is the only one with explicit information about the student's high school program. The dependent variable, college preference, was dichotomized, with categories: preferred senior (scored as 1), preferred community (scored as 0).

    Twenty-seven percent of the individual variation in college preference is explained by the variables other than ethnicity. By far the most important predictors of college preference are the measures of high school background, college admissions average and high school program, with standardized regression coefficients of .37 and .26, respectively. By contrast, the equivalent coefficients for family variables are: father's education, .00; mother's education, .04; family income, .00. Adding ethnicity (expressed as a set of dummy variables) to this equation contributes less than 1% to the explained variance. Since ethnicity explains 6% of the variance when no other variables are in the equation, it seems clear that most of the ethnic variation in college preference -- at least in terms of the choice between a senior and a community college -- is explained or mediated by college admissions average and high school program.

21. This is reported in David J. Armor, The American School Counselor (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1969).

22. However, it must be acknowledged that the behavior of counselors is in part affected by information CUNY provides regarding the relative difficulty of gaining admission to various campuses. Thus, a student indicating a preference for a particular college may be discouraged by his or her counselor if the counselor feels that the student's chances of admission are low.

23. Jerome Karabel, "Community Colleges and Social Stratification".

24. The process is described in the well-known article by Burton Clark, "The Cooling Out Function in Higher Education," American Journal of Sociology, 1960, 65, pp. 569-576.

25. See, for example, Bowles and Gintis, Schooling in Capitalist America, p. 230.

26. Because it is clearly aimed at a four year program, pre-engineering has been included among the liberal arts curricula in Table 5.

27. We speculate that within non-academic high schools, a positive value is attached to the career-oriented curricula. The better students were thus more likely to be directed toward such programs in the community colleges.

28. Since our data extend only through the spring of 1975, the generally lower rates for the 1972 cohort reflect the recency of graduation for many of its members who had received the Associate degree.

29. Robert M. Hauser and Thomas Daymont, "Schooling, Ability and Earnings: Cross-Sectional Findings 8 to 14 Years After High School Graduation," Sociology of Education, 1977, 50, pp. 182-205.

30. Rena Kramer, Barry Kaufman and Lawrence Podell, Distribution of Grades: 1972, Office of Program and Policy Research, City University of New York, 1974.

31. The degree of grade inflation has been documented for the national scene by Arvo. E. Juola, Grade Inflation (1960-1973): A Preliminary Report (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University, Office of Evaluation Services, 1974); further discussion is found in Malcolm G. Scully, "Crackdown on 'Grade inflation'," The Chronicle of Higher Education, December 22, 1975, pp. 1, 12.

32. Since the sample data somewhat overestimate the grade point average of regular dropouts, the frequency of transferring was probably not as great as Table 8 implies.

33. Graduation in this Table means the achievement of any CUNY degree, no matter which college was entered, and no matter where the degree was obtained. Virtually all students who entered a senior college obtained a baccalaureate, if they obtained a degree at all, but some who entered community colleges obtained a B.A. without first having earned an A.A.

    Also, for senior college students, graduation rates are meaningful only for the 1970 and '71 cohorts. The 1972 cohort had not been in college long enough to accumulate substantial numbers of graduates.

34. A full report of the national findings is presented in Alexander W. Astin, College Dropouts: A National Profile, Office of Research, American Council On Education (Washington, D.C.: 1972). At our request, Astin recomputed his national data for the subset of public colleges and universities, so as to achieve greater comparability with the CUNY data. In the national data we have considered students with high school averages of less than B- as comparable to senior college open admissions students, and those with averages of less than C+ as comparable to community college open admissions students.

35. Our comparison of sample and population figures in the Appendix shows that the overall graduation rates of regular and open admissions senior college students in the 1970 sample are 4 percentage points higher than comparable graduation rates in the population. A similar comparison for regular and open admissions community college students in the 1970 and 1972 cohorts shows that graduation rates in the sample are from 2 to 4 percentage points higher than comparable rates in the populations.

    In all these cases, the magnitudes of sample-population differences in graduation rates are mirrored in equivalent sample-population differences in dropout rates. In the case of dropout, of course, sample rates are lower than population ones. Since sample-population differences in graduation and dropout rates offset each other, there is little difference between sample and population rates of retention.

36. That substantial numbers of CUNY students take more than the "normal" four years to graduate is apparently not a recent development. A study done in the 1960's focusing on an academically strong sample, found that after four years the graduation rate was less than 50%. However, over 70% graduated after seven years. Pearl Max, How Many Graduated (New York: City University of New York, 1968).

37. Jack E. Rossman, Helen S. Astin, Alexander W. Astin, and Elaine H. El-Khawas, Open Admissions at the City University of New York: An Analysis of the First Year (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1975), pp. 124-127.

38. Although probably atypical, extreme responses have occurred. They are illustrated by two books presenting an apocalyptic perception. See L. G. Heller, The Death of the American University: With Special Reference to the Collapse of City College of New York (New Rochelle, New York: Arlington House, 1973); Geoffrey Wagner, The End of Education: The Experience of the City University of New York with Open Enrollment and the Threat to Higher Education in America (Cranbury, N.J.: A. S. Barnes and Co., 1976).

39. Of course, definitive research on the occupational benefits generated by open admissions is most difficult, since the initial graduates of open admissions were faced with a contracting job market.

40. The conflict and processes which led to this retrenchment cannot be fully elaborated here. A summary and analysis is presented in David E. Lavin and Richard A. Silberstein, "New York City Crisis and the Fate of Open Admissions", paper presented to the meetings of Society for the Study of Social Problems, New York, August, 1976. A full analysis will be presented in David E. Lavin, Richard A. Silberstein, and Richard D. Alba, Conflict and Opportunity: An Analysis of the Open Admissions Experiment at the City University of New York, in preparation.

41. When tuition was imposed at levels in force at the State University, the State's tuition assistance plan (TAP) also became operative. Under TAP, low income students (e.g., almost all minority students) would have qualified for full tuition assistance. Initially the mechanics were not well understood by students, and this probably had the effect of reducing applications from minority students. The negative effects of tuition were felt most strongly by middle income students and by part-time students. A large percentage of the latter were minority students. CUNY tried to provide for these part-timers by providing its own funds for tuition assistance. When efforts were made (by City and State) to revoke this local assistance, the University responded by making it easier to be classified as a full-time student.